

536, 648

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
17 June 2004 (17.06.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2004/051982 A1**

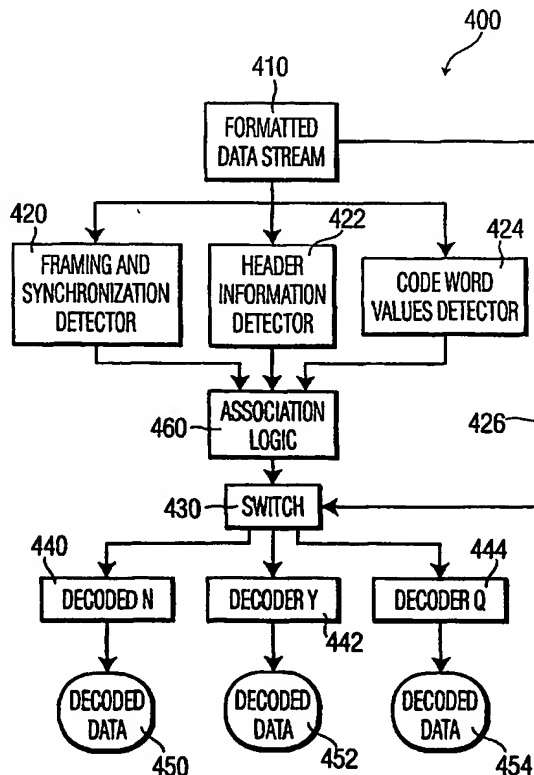
- (51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: H04N 5/00, 7/24
- (21) International Application Number:  
PCT/IB2003/005441
- (22) International Filing Date:  
26 November 2003 (26.11.2003)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:  
60/430,930 4 December 2002 (04.12.2002) US
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- (81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR SELECTING PARTICULAR DECODER BASED ON BITSTREAM FORMAT DETECTION



(57) Abstract: The present invention provides an apparatus and method for switching between particular decoders within a plurality of decoders, each decoder adapted to decode bit streams having a unique format. The apparatus comprises format detectors which output format indicators based on information from the bit stream. Logic responsive to the format detector output may determine a particular decoder among the plurality of decoders. The particular decoder determined by the logic decodes the formatted bit stream. At least one switch, responsive to the determination of the logic, connects the formatted bit stream to the particular decoder. The format detectors detect at least one of the frame information, or start code, the packet header information, and the code word values in a portion of a coded content of the bit stream, wherein the code word values, derivatives thereof, or a pattern of code word values, are unique to the bit stream format.

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European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Declaration under Rule 4.17:**

- *as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(ii)) for all designations*

**Published:**

- *with international search report*
- *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*

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